

## Message

**From:** Crooks, Jennifer [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=001BFF3D40594A238E3864A4FDD0FC29-JCROOKS]  
**Sent:** 10/11/2016 1:35:23 PM  
**To:** Rowan, Anne [rowan.anne@epa.gov]; Kelley, Jeff [kelley.jeff@epa.gov]  
**CC:** Tom Poy [poy.thomas@epa.gov]; Rita Bair [bair.rita@epa.gov]; Andrea Porter [porter.andrea@epa.gov]; Miguel Del Toral [deltoral.miguel@epa.gov]; Hyde, Tinka [hyde.tinka@epa.gov]  
**Subject:** FW: USEPA delayed helping with Legionella in 2015 as state worked on PR plan

Anne/Jeff—If you recall, this email of mine was brought up by the Detroit Free Press in February 2016, saying that EPA had a conference call discussing Legionella in March 2015. I will forward it to you all. Monica Lee and I think Jeff Kelley worked on a response to the Detroit Free Press article, saying that it's CDC that works with the County Health Depts on issues like Legionella. Also, the title of this article doesn't match what is written in the article.  
 Jennifer

**From:** Harris, Kimberly  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 11, 2016 8:17 AM  
**To:** Bair, Rita <bair.rita@epa.gov>; Bartlett, Janice <bartlett.janice@epa.gov>; Bell, Kristina <bell.kristina@epa.gov>; Bosscher, Valerie <bosscher.valerie@epa.gov>; Brown, Alicia <brown.alicia@epa.gov>; Collymore, La Yvette <collymore.layvette@epa.gov>; Crooks, Jennifer <crooks.jennifer@epa.gov>; Deltoral, Miguel <deltoral.miguel@epa.gov>; Drake, Wendy <drake.wendy@epa.gov>; Howard, Odessa <howard.odessa@epa.gov>; Janczy, Joseph <janczy.joseph@epa.gov>; Kuefler, Janet <kuefler.janet@epa.gov>; Lagunas, Frank <lagunas.frank@epa.gov>; McElhinney, Cary <mcelhinney.cary@epa.gov>; Murphy, Thomas <murphy.thomas@epa.gov>; Nguyen, Thienthao Thi <nguyen.thao@epa.gov>; Noureldin, Mostafa <noureldin.mostafa@epa.gov>; Palmer, Michele <Palmer.Michele@epa.gov>; Porter, Andrea <porter.andrea@epa.gov>; Poy, Thomas <poy.thomas@epa.gov>; Roberts, Lynne <roberts.lynne@epa.gov>; Rouhani, Sahba <rouhani.sahba@epa.gov>; Shoven, Heather <shoven.heather@epa.gov>; Spaulding, William <spaulding.william@epa.gov>; Werbach, Kristine <werbach.kristine@epa.gov>; Wilson, Jennifer <wilson.jenniferA@epa.gov>; Wormbly, Dorothy <wormbly.dorothy@epa.gov>; Young, Denise <young.denise@epa.gov>  
**Subject:** USEPA delayed helping with Legionella in 2015 as state worked on PR plan

### **EPA delayed helping with Legionella in 2015 as state worked on PR plan**

[http://www.mlive.com/news/index.ssf/2016/10/epa\\_offer\\_to\\_help\\_with\\_legione.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/index.ssf/2016/10/epa_offer_to_help_with_legione.html)

FLINT, MI -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency offered to investigate the Flint area's Legionnaires' disease outbreak in early 2015, saying its labs were "set up (and) ready," but the overture was shelved to give the state of Michigan more time to "figure out" a plan for telling people about the epidemic first.

Documents released last week by the EPA in response to Freedom of Information Act requests show that top officials in the agency's Region 5 office offered to conduct sampling and analysis for Legionella in March 2015, nine months before Gov. Rick Snyder first told the public about the outbreak that resulted in 12 deaths in 2014 and 2015.

The EPA is the second federal agency that offered technical assistance to the state as it attempted to deal with an explosion of Legionnaires' cases here — help that wasn't initially accepted by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services or the state Department of Environmental Quality.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also offered to conduct a comprehensive Legionnaires' investigation after it was contacted by the Genesee County Health Department in February 2015, but the state never made an official request for that help, telling the CDC it had the skills and resources needed to perform the investigation itself.

Spokeswomen for Snyder and the DHHS would not comment on the documents released by EPA last week, including an email from Jennifer Crooks, an EPA program manager, which summarizes a conference call between state and federal officials in March 2015.

The email to Stephen Busch and Mike Prysby, water quality regulators for the Michigan DEQ, says the EPA had labs "set-up now and ready for Legionella sampling and analysis," once the "state goes public with the issue of Legionella."

EPA environmental engineer "Darren (Lytle) asked, How can we help? ..." the email from Crooks says in summarizing the conference call. "Tom Poy (Region 5 Ground Water Drinking Water branch chief) said the state is currently figuring out a communication-with-the-public plan."

Neither DEQ nor DHHS ever publicized the spike in Legionnaires' cases, which the state now says represents the largest healthcare-associated outbreak known in the U.S., and its investigation with the county Health Department has failed to pinpoint its cause for certain.

Two weeks after Crooks' email to Prysby and Busch, she told Lytle in a follow-up email that she discussed the Legionella issue with Liane Shekter Smith, former chief of the DEQ's drinking water program, and was told state health officials were already conducting their own "epidemiological investigation to determine the source of Legionella. ..."

Shekter Smith has since been charged with misconduct in office and willful neglect of duty.

Snyder has said state agencies never told him about the outbreak or suspicions it was tied to Flint's water supply until the governor acknowledged another problem with city water — rising lead levels — at the end of 2015.

The Legionella outbreak began just weeks after the city stopped using water from Lake Huron, replacing it with Flint River in April 2014, a change made by emergency managers appointed by the governor.

Legionellosis is a respiratory disease caused by Legionella bacteria, according to the CDC. Sometimes the bacteria cause a serious type of pneumonia or lung infection called Legionnaires' disease, which can be fatal.

MLive could not reach a representative of the DEQ for comment on why state employees never acted on the offer of help from the EPA.

Both Busch and Prysby already face charges of criminal wrongdoing for their roles in the Flint water crisis, and attorneys for each did not comment on the emails addressed to their clients.

Busch downplayed suspicions that Flint water could be tied to Legionnaires' deaths in a March 13, 2015, email, calling it "highly unlikely" that Legionella would be present in water because Flint was using ozone and chlorine in treatment.

On March 20, however, Busch also wrote to top officials in the city of Flint, warning that they should take action to provide customers with "water quality that helps limit the potential for Legionella occurrence in premise plumbing."

Although state and county health officials have said they can neither prove nor disprove a link between river water and Legionella, some of the current and former state employees charged with crimes related to Flint water were involved in efforts to keep control the bacteria.

Corinne Miller, the former director of the Bureau of Disease Control, Prevention and Epidemiology at DHHS, pleaded no contest to neglect of duty as part of a plea deal with special prosecutors for state Attorney General Bill Schuette.

Miller was charged for her role in failing to report the Legionnaires' epidemic to health care providers and the general public.

Crooks is the same EPA official who also raised early concerns about lead levels in Flint water in early 2015, months before testing by Virginia Tech university would show the extent of the problem.

As early as February 2015, just weeks after initial water testing in homes showed the first signs of rising lead levels, Crooks said in an email to two DEQ officials, "The different chemistry water is leaching out contaminants from the insides of the biofilms inside the pipes" in Flint.

"I think lead is a good indicator that other contaminants are also present in the tap water that obviously were not present in the compliance samples taken at the (Flint water) plant. ... There's actual evidence that the water is leaching contaminants from the biofilms," Crooks wrote at the time.